A SYNOPSIS ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF LAW OF KARMA IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

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INTRODUCTION

Man is considered to be the highest creature in the universe. We are born with some destiny and to fulfill this destiny we have to perform some kinds of action. Karma is an activity, which all the human beings have to perform, until death releases them from the body prison. Karma is derived from the Sanskrit word 'kri' which means action. Karma may mean conscious action; sacrifice; duty; self-surrender etc. nobody can remain exist without performing any kind of action. The doctrine of karma implies that one person's karma cannot have an effect on another person's future. Good karmas lead to good consequences and bad karmas lead to bad consequences. Karma has three distinguishable components, namely, the agent, the action, and the object. Karma is the most famous concept in Indian philosophy. There are different views of doctrine of karma in Indian philosophy like the views of Jainism, Buddhism, Nyāya-Vaishesika, Mimāṃsā and Advaita Vedānta. The doctrine of karma occupies a more significant position in Jaina philosophy. In Jainism, karma is known as material in nature. It is of the nature of the subtle matter which penetrated into the soul and binds them to the saṃsāra. Karmic matter unites with the soul just like water unites with milk. Passions are responsible for the entrance of karmic matter (āsrava) into the soul. Jainism talks of four passions like, anger (krodha), greed (lobha), pride (māna) and delusion (māya), which are called sticky substances. These sticky substances hide the real nature of the soul and passions are due to ignorance.

According to Jainism, the inflow of karmic particles is known as ᾱsrava. When they penetrated into the soul and bind, it is called Bandha. To come out of from bondage, Jainism talks of the cultivation of the Triratna (Right Knowledge, Right Faith, and Right Conduct) by which one can get liberation. When the inflow of karmic particles is stopped, it is called saṃvara. And lastly, when the karmic particles are gradually worn out, it is called nirjarᾱ.

Jainism talks of eight types of karma: Jñᾱnᾱvaraṇīya (the knowledge-obscuring karma):- it hides the right knowledge of the soul and produces different degrees of knowledge; Darśanᾱvaraṇīya (the connation-obscuring karma):- it hides the conation quality of the soul; Vedaṇīya (the feeling-karma):- it produces pleasure and pain and thereby hides the real nature of the soul; Mohaṇīya (the deluding-karma):- it hides the right attitudes of the soul with regard to faith and conduct etc., and yields passions and variety of mental states; Āyuh (the age-karma):- it determines the life-length of an individual; Nᾱma(the body-making karma):- it deals with the personality like the kind of body, senses, health etc.; Gotra(the family-determining karma):- it determines the caste, family etc of an individual; Antarᾱya(the obstructive-karma):- it prevents the inborn energy of the soul and also prevents the doing of an action, good or bad, when there is a will to do it. There are also some discussions about ghatiya and aghatiya relating to these eight karmas discussed in Jainism. From this, we come to the conclusion that as the soul is regarded as the doer of action, so the soul is sole responsible for the consequences. Therefore liberation can be attaining when there is complete disassociation of matter from the soul.

Karma is also an important aspect of Buddhist philosophy. Karma in Buddhism rests on the doctrine of dependent origination. According to the doctrine, man's present life is the result of his past life and the future depends upon the present. According to Buddhism, due to their karmas, men are not similar or identical, as a result some are long living, some are short living, some are healthy and some are unhealthy etc. the law of karma says that, the fruits of the action depends upon the character of the action. If a man has committed a sin, he will have to suffer for it in the hell but if a man has by chance committed a sin, he will get rid of it after suffering a little in the very life. The theory of karma is not a personal law and it

works by itself without rely on any agent or soul. Buddha's doctrine of karma is not mechanical because man's present life is determined by his past karmas and the future is free and depends on our will. According to the Buddhist philosophy, work, which is influenced by attachment, desire, greed etc, generates the seeds of karma causing rebirth but work without raga, moha, dvesa does not cause bondage. Buddha also talks of eight fold path by practicing of which man come out of bondage and attained liberation or Nirvāṇa which is the ultimate destiny of human life.

Similarly in Nyāya, the law of karma also occupies a central place. According to nyāya, man has dual characteristics i.e. body-mind complex. As long as there is body-mind complex, there is the necessity of action. According to nyāya system, your present life is the consequence of your past karmas. Even the body-mind complex is also determined by the past karmas. Every individual has unique identity. As one thinks so are the psyche changes from time to time. Due to lack of knowledge one develops raga, dvesa, moha, ahamkara and thinks that this false knowledge is real and develops feelings like 'Me', 'Mine'. This is the main cause of bondage. Some actions get reaction immediately and some actions take longer time to get the consequences. People get his karmaphala in form of pleasurable and painful live. According to nyāya, Adṛsta (unseen power) needs to be aroused to account for karmic determinism. Due to divine will, there is harmony in the state of nature. Only by self-will one can get liberation (apavarga). Real knowledge is the cause of liberation. Real knowledge is attained through steady contemplation, righteous conduct and practice of yoga.

In purva mimāṃsā, action is equated with dharma. Real action is that which is sure to bring happiness sooner or later. One is bound to perform his duty. An action performed here and now, may reap fruit after a long time in this life or in heaven. This generates karmic potency. This karmic potency is known as apūrva because it was non-existent before the action is performed. According to mimāṃsā, law of karma is impersonal. It explains the karmic effect in form of prārabdha. Every action possesses potency (śakti) which produces its result on availability of suitable condition. Mimāṃsākas, talks of different types of karmas. Nitya karmas are refers to daily duties of a person. Naimitika karmas refer to

obligatory actions performed on specific occasion. kāmyakarmas refers to intended action which are directed to particular goal. Niṣiddha karmas refer to prohibited karmas which lead one to hell. So according to mimāṃsā, every good action is rewarded and every bad action is punished. So 'duty has to be performed for the sake of duty'.

In Advaita vedānta, the law of karma occupies a paramount place. avidyā is the root cause of bondage and vidyā is the sole means of liberation. kāma is born out of ignorance. Due to avidyā, the self wrongly recognize itself with the body. The nature of the body in which the soul resides is the consequence of the previous karma. One performs new action in order to experiencing the consequences of past actions which renewed bondage. Man is responsible for his actions. Man has the inherent quality to overcome avidyā and pursue the path which leads to the state of perfection. One can attain the highest state through prayer, worship and by the grace of God. So actions done with passion lead one to bondage and actions done without any selfish motive leads one to liberation. According to Advaita vedānta, a liberated soul can performs action for the cause of collective well being (lokasaṁgraha).

Every action has equal reaction. The doer of action is responsible for his reaction. The action-reaction relationship is just like cause–effect relationship. The law of cause and effect makes an integral part of Indian philosophy. This law is termed as karma which means 'to act'. 'As you sow, so shall you reap' is the fundamental tenet of law of karma. Man is the architect of his own destiny. Karma is the root cause of embodiment. What we think, say and do, in that way it brings conditioning of the mind. There is nothing in this universe which is absolutely good or absolutely bad. Good and bad are value judgments made by an individual. "Good is that which takes us near to our self and evil is that which creates a distance between us and our real self". If an action of an individual is good, then the next birth will be rewarding and if it is not, then the next birth will be punishing or may degenerate into lower form of life. One should act in his life according to Dharma or what is right.

Karma may be classified as Sᾱttvika karma, Rᾱjasika karma, Tᾱmasika karma. In Sᾱttvika karma, an action is performed without attachment, desire, selfish motive etc. and performed an action for the benefit of others. In Rᾱjasika karma, an action is performed with desires, selfishness, egoistic to get one's own ends. In Tᾱmasika karma, an action in performed in delusion without thinking of the loss, injury, problems, suffering that follow from the action. But is it possible to performed action like Sᾱttvika karma? Now, people are very selfish in nature. They are only thinking of their own comfort, pleasure, benefit etc. so how should we motivate them to perform Sᾱttvika karma?

The action must be end-specific i.e. certain consequences to achieve something. Such action obviously bound the doer. But by this action one cannot attain liberation, which is the summum bonum of human life. So how can we get liberation? So, we have to perform that kind of action which helps us to get moksa. But which type of action we have to do? In this case, the Bhagavad Gita, which is known as the holy scripture of Hinduism, shows us the path to get rid of this problem. The Bhagavad gita spells out the secret of doing action, which is known as Niskᾱma Karma. Then the doctrine of karma constitutes an important issue in Indian philosophy. The dissertation shall address itself to the philosophical significance of karma theory with special reference to the Bhagvad Gita.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

Karma is an important factor of human life. It is the process of cause and effect, which is associated with our thoughts, emotions and behavior. '*As you sow, so shall you reap'*, this single statement contains the essence of what karma is.

'Karmayoga' makes an important place in Bhagavad Gita. Yoga means 'to unite'. But how yoga is connected with karma? What should be added with karma and what should be subtracted from karma to become a karmayogin?

Every action is some goal-specific. To live is to act, to act is to remain bound to the cycle of birth and death. Then how liberation is possible?

We found that, Bhagavad Gita makes a classification between desireless (Niskāma) action and desireful (sakāma) action. I want to mainly focus on these two concepts that, on what ground Bhagavad Gita makes such classification? Does it classify on the ground of the presence or the absence of desire from action?

Similarly, the karma yoga of the Bhagavad Gita teaches that action is not constrained on the way of liberation rather action is prerequisite for achieving the highest state. The doctrine of Niskama Karma spells out the secret how the doer cannot bind himself to the bondage of action while performing an action. According to Gita, it is the sense of doership that makes one bound to the action reaction maxim. But my point is without doership, we cannot act. For example, when we act something, we say that 'I do it'. What is the meaning of this 'I'? It is not an easy task to do something without doership. So, I want to make a brief study regarding the interpretation of 'Doership' in Bhagavat Gita?

I find a verse in Bhagavat Gita that "Karmanye Badhikaraste Ma Phalesu Kadachan". That means to do action without any attachment to the fruit thereof. But is it possible to do action without any desire of fruit? Does the word 'without any attachment to the fruit' make any relevance to the modern society?

According to Bhagavad Gita, it is the duty of each member to perform his duty and responsibility, according to rules and regulation of society. But why such duties must be performed? What benefit is gained by performing them, what harm is caused by not performing them?

In Bhagavad Gita, I find in a verse that Lord Krishna was said that all human beings who sacrifice everything to me, they become free from the bondage of reactions from actions. But can we sacrifice everything to Him and hope for the liberation without doing any action? Is it possible?

All living entities are controlled by their own natures. Sometime a man performs some action against his nature due to any reasonable circumstances. But it is not his real nature. In that case can we say that he is wrong? What type of justice should we give him? What is the interpretation of Bhagavad Gita about this

situation? What should be the nature (svabhava) of a man, so that he is considered to be a good person and his action should be considered as good action? What should be the nature of a man in order to get liberation?

Sometime we see that different people are performed one type of action but they are getting different results. Why is it so?

So the parameter of problems which are to examined are as follows:

The karma theory shows that liberation can be attained by karma alone? How?
We do not see our past lives. So how we believe it? How it is related with present life?
What causes a desired to be fulfilled?
Why desires are not fulfilled immediately?
What aspect of an action is returned to you?
Doesn't this contradict the law of desire?
Without following the fruits of action, how could we act?
What is karma yoga? What are the qualifications to become a karmayogin?
Is it possible for a common people to become a karmayogin?
Are we believed in fate? Is there any link between action and fate?

The broad objective of the study is to analysis what karma is in general and spells out the secret of Niskāma karma with special reference to Bhagavad Gita in particular.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

To make a broader study about the theory of karma and different types of karma elaborately.
To get to know about all verses of karmayoga in Bhagavad Gita.
To make a broader study of karma, rebirth and liberation and also gets information about Bhakti.
To make a broader study of different systems views of Indian philosophy with special reference to law of karma.
To get knowledge about the use of law of karma to enhance our life.

To find out the problems and suggest corrective measures.

Literature Review:-

The Bhagavad Gitā (S.Radhakrishna, 1993):-

The Bhagavad Gitā is a religious text which has a great philosophical significance as well as a powerful weapon for the renewal of spiritual life. The opening section of the Gitā deals with the questions related to the problems of human action. In this book there is a discussion about the method of work. According to the author, life is work and work is done without the hope of result. It also explains what a man ought to do so that he will be able to attain spiritual destiny. He also discussed about the importance of sacrifice that how a person become free from all sins by giving sacrifice everything to God. The author also holds that how karma helps us to attain purity of mind. Desire is the main enemy of human being. Desire always grows more and more and it never satisfied. In this way, the author tries to give the message that, do your work consistently without the hoping of any result.

From my point of view, in this paper I would like to discuss about the concept of 'sacrifice' in Bhagavad Gitā. Does the concept 'sacrifice' have any relevance to the modern society? I find in a verse that "the good people who eat what is left from the sacrifice are released from all sins but those wicked people who prepare food for their own sake- verily they eat sin'. Today we see that people are selfish in nature. They only think of their own family. And is it possible to prepare food for all? I mean to say if I will prepare food for my family member or for myself, then I am considering as a wrong one?

An introduction to Ethics, (K.om.Narayan and Hrudananda Behera, 2013):- In this book the author give stress on karma and Niskāma karma. He shows up in his writing that nobody can exist in the world without action. Man is bound to perform some kind of action because of the trigunas which born out of prakriti. He also discussed different kinds of action. He also points out that a man can put himself on the path of karma yoga when he carries out his action with

sincerity and devotion without desire of the fruit of action. Every man performed his duty sincerely. There is also discussion about svadharma and svabhāva.

One's svabhava is determined by one's past action. One should cultivate equanimity so that he will be able to attain Brahma-nirvāna. The author also discussed about the ideal of niskāma karma. There is also discussion about whether action is determined or free. An action is blend of this two. In some occasions that is deterministic but there lies an inner thread of freedom in them.

In some context, I find that people are born with one svabhava but due to some situation, they changed their svabhavas. So can we say that determined of svabhava is situation specific? What is the real interpretation of svabhava?

This dissertation shall consist of five chapters:

Introduction
Karma yoga vis-à-vis Niskama karma
Karma, Jnana, Bhakti
Karma, Bandhan and Moksa
Conclusion

Introduction: This chapter should be devotee to spell out the nature and kinds of karma with special reference to Indian philosophy. Nobody can exist without action. Therefore, everyone must act. Action makes sense only in human domain. It does not make sense in nonhuman case. Therefore, karma makes an important part of human life.

There are three important aspect of action, such as the agent (Karta), action (karma), and consequences (karmaphala). Action in addition, consequences makes a nexus. Every action has equal reaction. Thus the agent owns the action, he also reap that kind of consequences. So that he falls in cycle of birth and death. Action and consequences are two sides of the same coin. Every action has certain goal. It is the means to fulfill some ends. So the agent plays pivotal role in action

process. So law of karma states a maxim '*As you sow, so shall you reap'. As is the action, so is the consequences'*.

Action can be stated into three categories, such as, samchita, kriyamana, prarabdha. Samchita karma refers to all those accumulated good or bad karmas in the past or present life that are due for reward or punishment respectively. The karmic fruit may be actualized sooner or later. Kriyamana karma refers to the consequences which we get immediately. Prarabdha refers to all those actions whose results or consequences are to be enjoyed or suffered in this life or in the next life. Here a question arise that we do not see our past so how could we believe it?

We are bounded with actions. And without some end we can't act and if we act, then we fall in bondage. So how is liberation possible? Law of karma spells out the secret by which we can continue to perform action without bound to the consequences. So now, the question arise what law of karma is? How could we know which karma is good or which is bad? This chapter in nutshell provides the backdrop against which discussions in the subsequent chapters shall be undertaken.

Karma yoga vis-à-vis Niskama Karma:

The concept of karma or the karma doctrine is one of the significant features of Indian philosophic thought. The Bhagavad Gita teaches us human action from the ethical perspectives. Gita is known as 'Lord's Song'. In Bhagavad Gita we found the conversation between Lord Krishna and Arjuna. When in the battle field, Arjuna was in dilemmatic situation for 'whether to act or not act', at that time Lord Krishna told him a philosophy of action which is necessary for a moral agent at all times.

The Bhagvat Gita refers to varieties of action such as Nitya, Naimattika, sahaja etc. Nitya means the regular religious activities. Naimittika means occasional religious activities. Sahaja means the works backed by one's svabhava. There are also discussions about karma, Akarma, Vikarma and Naiskarmya.

Karma means all actions of body, mind and speech. Vikarma means evil action. Naiskarmya means the highest of non-action or inactivity. Akarma means the ideal actions in the Gita. That means an action performed with detachment for the fruit. Akarma can be taken as Niskama karma or yoga.

“Work is said to be the means of the sage who wishes to attain to yoga”. I want to make a broader study in these questions: Who is karma yogin? What are the qualifications to become a karmayogi? What it teaches us? Are we not fall in the cycle of birth and death by attaining karma yoga?

Niskama karma literally means karma without attachment. I find some oddity that without any motive, intention, we have to act. But all actions are backed by some motives or intentions. Even the desire of attaining liberation is also desire. Then how could we perform action without any desire? So I want to focus on the issue that does Niskama karma tells about renunciation of action or inaction? So the important question is, can a moral agent be completely detached? What is the right course of action? The Gita said that the incentive for action would be the welfare of all (lokasamgraha). But is it possible for doing welfare of all? Now, in this modern age, we found that maximum people are self-centered. They can only think of themselves. So does loksamgraha makes sense in this modern era? This chapter shall dwell on two competing views on the issue on karma yoga vis-à-vis Niskama karma.

Karma, Bandhan and Moksa:

The role of karma is considered an important in explaining bondage and liberation. It not only explains the human destiny but also the life as such. All actions have equal reactions. The doer is bound to reap the consequences. Karma has its inevitable bondage. On the other hand, action is said to be indispensable for yoga or the highest state of perfection. To act is to be in bondage but the Gita said that only by act on gets liberation. So, the important question is which type of action leads us to bondage and which type of action leads us to liberation?

Every action has some goals. There could be alternate means to attain a particular end. But which means is good or which is bad? Whatever action we do, we fall in

karmic nexus. So how could we come out from this nexus? The Gita said that the only way to keep oneself from this nexus is that to surrender everything to God and suspend the sense of kartabhava. But is it possible to give up the sense of agency?

Liberation is known as the sumum bonum of life. What is the right path to attain this? Does karma make it possible? So I want to focus on the interlink relation between action, bondage and liberation.

Rebirth is also considered as an important issue in the doctrine of karma. Karma is responsible to take rebirth. Due to karmic nexus, man falls in cycle of birth and death. Due to rebirth, one cannot be able to attain liberation. What's the secret is there which leads us to liberation? Is there any secret in the Bhagvad Gita to become liberated?

The theory of karma and rebirth raises numerous questions: such as how, when, and why did the cycle start in the first place? What is the relative karmic merit of one karma versus another and why, and what evidence is there that rebirth actually happens, among others? I also make a deeper study in these issues.

Karma, Jnana and Bhakti:

The doctrine of karma is the basis of moral life. As we know, human agents are free to choose actions, but not consequences. So that means, there must be freewill in doing action. In exercising one' choice, one must have the right knowledge. So, right knowledge is indispensable for Niskama karma. Hence, there is an important relation between action and knowledge. Here arise a question that, how right knowledge be formed?

Knowledge and action are not divergent paths. One involves the other. Knowledge and action have the same goal. Action without knowledge degenerates into Sakama karma but action performed with right knowledge is liberative. We cannot think of knowledge without action. According to Bhagvat Gita, only jnana leads to right action and right action leads to yoga. But is it possible in all situations to make action with right knowledge? What is right

knowledge? What is bad knowledge? How right knowledge is attained? How can we know what is bad and what is good action?

Bhakti is interlinked with jnana and karma. According to Bhagvat Gita, by performing Niskama karma and cultivation of bhakti can be taken as the means to jnana which is the state of perfection. Are action, knowledge and devotion complementary to each other? Sometime when we make any mistake, we are self realized that we are making mistake and try to rectify it. So can we treat self-realization is right knowledge?

Knowledge pertains to the ultimate questions in life: who am I? Why am I here? Why am I suffering? Where does everything come from? So, how action is related with knowledge? I want to focus on these issues also.

Similarly, there is a question that whether action is free or determined? If action could not have determinate and therefore, predictable consequences, then there would not have been incentive for righteous action and constraint for evil action. Exercising choice or free will is the basic presupposition of all moral valuations. Freedom in action is meaningful in respect of the motive and intention of the doer. I want to focus that what Bhagavad Gita's view on this issue.

Conclusion: Besides summing of analysis of the preceding chapter it shall spell out how the Gita give emphasis on the role of free will and human effort. The Gita teaches us that one can do rites, rituals, sacrifice, and duty without hoping of any reward because when these actions are done in a detached spirit, they do not have any binding power. The Bhagavad Gita teaches us to sacrifice all our actions to the supreme agent. We have to continue our action in a detached manner and sacrificed our will, fruits of action to the divine will. Renunciation is to be practiced not towards work but to the fruits of work.

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